REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action dated April 24, 2003, the Examiner has rejected Claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a). One new sheet of clean formal drawings has been submitted. An identified copy of the new sheet of drawings is attached hereto for Examiner's approval per the new guidelines set for Amendments. By this paper, the Specification, Abstract, and Claims 1, 2, 4-11, and 13 have been amended to more particularly point out that which the Applicant regards as the invention. Further, Claims 3 and 12 have been cancelled without prejudice. For the reasons set forth fully below, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1, 2, 4-11, and 13, the claims remaining in this Application, as amended, are allowable.

Applicants' invention is directed to a device for balancing eccentricity of a spindle drive to avoid blocking of the spindle drive during lifting movement of a platform. The platform is mounted on several axiparallel spindles by respective bearing devices, and can be lifted together with the bearing devices axially along the spindles. Low-friction bearing devices with radial bearing clearance are arranged to balance any radial eccentricity of the rotating threaded spindles so that a relative radial movement of the rotating spindles to the platform is possible with limited force expenditure. This low friction, radial clearance spindle drive arrangement is an important aspect of Applicants' invention which is neither shown nor in any way taught by the prior art.

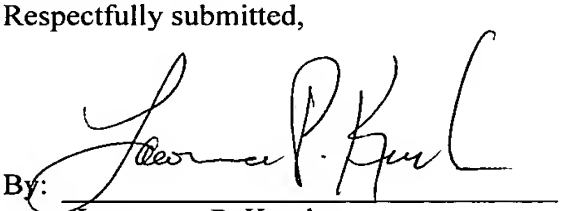
Claims 1, 2, 4-11, and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bayne, et al., in view of Joffe. The reference to Bayne, et al., shows an apparatus including a container having a platen vertically movable by a spindle. The Joffe reference shows a spindle (lead screw) having a ball-bearing connection between a movable nut and supported work piece. The Examiner has dismissed Applicants' claimed multi-spindle arrangement as a mere duplication of parts. However such arrangement is an important aspect of Applicants' invention, and, with the low-friction bearings, yields the unexpected result of preventing blocking (binding) of the spindles as the platform is elevated. The ball-bearings of Joffe are for a different purpose, and their combination with Bayne, et al. would not work as taught by Applicant unless due to spindle eccentricity the claimed radial clearances are included. Accordingly, Applicant's

invention would not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the cited references either individually or in any proper combination thereof. Therefore, amended independent Claims 1 and 7, and amended Claims 2, 4-6, 8-11, and 13, dependent directly or indirectly thereon, should now be allowed.

Applicants are not aware of any additional patents, publications, or other information not previously submitted to the Patent and Trademark Office which would be required under 37 C.F.R. §1.99.

This Application is now believed to be in condition for favorable reconsideration and early allowance, and such actions are respectfully requested. If, upon considering the content of this paper, the Examiner concludes that there are any remaining open issues, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned directly so that such issues can be resolved.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

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